

AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Within Sociolinguistics, Scholars have been working on how codes differ from one another in terms of their evolution, historical antecedents form, structure, and attributes. They have also looked at how languages resemble each other in terms of the forms and structure, the social functions they perform, and the status they perform, and the status they are given as a result of the functions they are made to perform in the society on both national and international levels of the society. So the general practice however is to see language types along two major Parameters –the formal and functional parameters. In this work the writer shall be examining the Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis. He focused on a study of Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis and some rules that guide interaction in language Discourse, all as progressive approaches to internalization of English Language education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Internationalization, Discourse Analysis.

“Languages are said to represent state of affairs other than themselves”. This traditional view of language captures adequately the fact that language is the tool used to bring realities into existence, Igiri (2017) “He maintains in his work that “human achievements are said to be products of intensive thinking and reflections”. He affirms that language is so central to thinking or thought that no thought is possible where language is absent.

With these affirmations above, one can say that Language plays vital roles in human society on both local and international levels. As a result, Internationalization of Education in Nigeria may not be effective or achieved without proper application of this an important tool, “Language”. So, the paper is presented as “An Overview of Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis, A Progressive Approach to Internationalization of English Language Education in Nigeria”. Discourse Analysis studies naturally occurring Discourse, which could be spoken or written. It arose in an attempt by linguistics to study the organization of language above the sentence. It is an approach that is a departure from the traditional approach to the study of language that focuses on the structure of language. The paper also discusses the notion of discourse, text interactive and non-interactive discourse, the structures and features of discourse, the structures and features of discourse. The writer also examined the common features of languages in context. All these concepts are the writer’s attempt to internationalize the English Language in Nigeria Education System.

The Concept of Sociolinguistics:

There are numerous definitions of Sociolinguistics. However, each of these definition does not fail to acknowledge that Sociolinguistics has to do with Language used and a society’s response to it .

So, Sociolinguistics can be seen as the study of the relationship between language and society, of language variation, and of attitudes about language. It is a branch of anthropological

linguistics that studies how language and culture are related, and how language is used in different social contexts. It is also the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context on the way language is used on both local and international.

In all these definitions, it is clear that sociolinguistics is a discipline that yokes sociology with linguistics. It is a branch of sociology and as a concept, it is concerned with how language use is a determinant of a given society 's linguistics requirements. Every society has linguistics codes acceptable for communication and interaction. Sociolinguistics shows how groups in a given society are separated by certain social variable like ethnicity, religion, status, gender, level of education, age etc, and how adherence to these variables is used to categorize individuals in social class or socio-economics classes.

For faster facilitation of internationalization of education in Nigeria, proper focus on the study of the concept of sociolinguistics in Nigeria higher education is necessary hence that will help to decode the linguistics codes in every society on both local and international.

The Concept of Internationalization of Education in Nigeria

In the first place, the word internationalization is coined out from the word international. The oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, (2015) explained international as an adjective that comes before a noun to modify its position, examples are international trade, law, sport, school, students and so forth. Internationalization which can be seen as a process is a noun in the English language word classes and is defined by the same dictionary, as something or a matter brought under the control of many nations.

Coming to Internationalization of education in Nigeria, khorsandi, (2014) defined the term as the process of commercializing research and post secondary education, and international competition for the recruitment of foreign students from wealthy and privileged countries in order to generate revenue, secure national profit, and build international reputation. Khorsandi went further to states the contents of internationalization such global competition for talents, recruitment of international students, development of international branch campuses, students, staff and scholars exchange program, internationalization of the curriculum and education partnerships between institutions regionally and internationally.

Knight (2014), sees the concept as an intercultural dimensions in the functions of teaching, research and institutional service delivery.

Uche & Ahunanya (2013), outline different models of internationalization of education, thus: International student mobility, faculty exchange and development, research collaboration, foreign language study, building international perspectives, international networks, distance education, locally supported education, twinning programs, Agreements and International Quality Assistance Systems.

Vorkapic (2016) defines it as the preparation of people to function in an increasingly international culturally relevant and diverse environment.

Text and Discourse

The terms Discourse and Text are used interchangeably, though there is a way in which scholars use them differently.

A Text simply refers to any instance of language use spoken or written. A text ranges from a word to a group of words that is meaningful in any particular context. A text is situated in a particular

context (environment in which it is used). The meaning of a text can be deduced in the context in which it is used. One major feature of a long text is cohesion or the ties that exist within it, among the words and the clauses that make it up. A text is also said to be coherent or has coherence if the whole text is seen as being logically connected.

A discourse on the other hand is any connected, naturally occurring language. It may also be written or spoken. A discourse is not meaningfully interpreted without a look at the social context in which it is produced. The context will take into consideration many other things which we normally take for granted, such as pauses, gap fillers, mannerisms, interruption, kinesics, facial expression, and other physical acts which contribute to the interpretation of the discourse.

Discourse Analysis:

The term Discourse Analysis refers to an attempt to study language above the sentence or above the clause. It is concerned with the study of linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges and written texts. It involves an investigation of rules governing the production and perception of discourse.

Discourse Analysis is an area of interest to scholars in other disciplines such as literary critics, communication scientists, media scholars, philosophers, sociologists and anthropologists. It describes different kinds of discourse such as conversation, e.g. doctor – patient conversation; family conversation; casual conversation; telephone conversation; court room conversation; or discourse; political interview and so forth.

Other forms of discourse studied includes: The internet discourse, SMS text messages; newspaper reports; service encounter; market discourse; talk shows; commercial advertisement; pulpit talk; and so forth.

The study of language in relation to the context in which it is used was greatly influenced by Bronislaw Malinowski, an anthropologist. He realized that the description of the language of a people is not complete without the cultural history behind the participants and the practices of their culture.

The modern approach to discourse analysis took its root in the work of M.A.K Halliday and other scholars. The first attempt to study the structure of discourse from linguistic point of view was the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1976). These Scholars studied the organization of Classroom Discourse, and published their findings in a book titled: *Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*.

Earlier before Sinclair and Coulthard, Sociologists and Anthropologists showed some interest in conversation. Scholars such as Gaffirke (1967), Sacks, Schegloff and Jeffersons (1974) examined the structure of talk and looked at such issues as turn taking in discourse, opening and closing in discourse by topic management, overlaps in conversation, and so forth.

Some Rules that Guides Interactions in Language Discourse

An interactive discourse

An interactive discourse is a discourse in which two or more people share ideas, taking turns and focusing on one or more topics, e.g. conversation. In an interactive discourse, there is cooperation between the interlocutors to ensure that the discourse is successful. In most cases, the interlocutors share a common cultural context; therefore some contextual cues aid the interpretation of the discourse.

A Non-interactive discourse

A non-interactive discourse on the other hand, has as its major characteristics, the domination by a speaker, who is constrained by the situation to control the discourse by determining who speaks, when they speak, and how they speak. Examples of non-interactive discourse are highly institutionalized discourses such as public lecture, Sermon, speech making etc.

Discourse structure

The Birmingham School sees discourse as a level above the Sentence. Using the classroom discourse, Sinclair and Coulthard (1976) divided discourse into a five unit scale called the discourse rank scale. The units are: Lesson, Transaction, Exchange, Move and Acts.

*Lesson, occupies the highest rank in the scale and it refers to everything that takes place in the classroom from the point the teacher enters and the time he leaves.

*Transaction is the basic unit of interaction, which consists of minimal contributions made by the two participants in the discourse. *An exchange is a dialogue or discussion. It is one of the fundamental units that make up social interaction. The structure of an exchange is IRF (where I =Initiation, R =Response, and F =Feedback). The teacher initiated the discourse, the pupil gives the response and the teacher gives the feedback. Eg:

T (I) What is a noun?

P (R) A noun is the name of a person, animal, place or thing

T (F) Correct

*Move, is a single minimal contribution of a speaker at once. It consists of one or more acts.

*Act, is the smallest unit in the discourse stratum. It has no structure except one goes below the level of discourse. Sinclair and Coulthard identified several classes of act used in discourse.

Discourse Features

Scholars have identified different features of discourse. Some of them, which will be discussed in this paper, are: turn taking, overlaps, adjacency, pairs, and insertion sequences.

(1) **Turn taking:** Turn Taking simply refers to the negotiation on the floor by the participants in discourse.

In Conversations, Speakers take turns. At any given movement, the turn that is in progress will typically belong to a single speaker. Participants in a conversation will not usually talk all at once. Conversely, there will not usually be stretches of time in which no one talks at all. This is not to say that simultaneous speech and silence never occur in conversations - They do. But when they occur, they are always treated as problems, which need to be repaired." Sacks and Schegloff (1974) observe that turn taking system provides a basic framework for the organization of interaction, since it allows participants to alternate the floor, so talk is not uncoordinated. Speakers are aware that a turn consists of one or more (but not fewer) "turn construction units" (grammatical entities like a complete clause or sentence). Turn construction unit may be delineated by intonation, stress or pause rather than grammar. Participants can use their knowledge of possible types of units to project the end-point of the turn currently in progress. At the end of the turn or construction unit, is the "turn

transition relevance place". (A point at which speaker-change may occur). To determine the end of a turn, the speaker needs to note a lot of things,

“the content of what is said”, “the prosodic structure of the speech”,
“the grammatical structure of the speech”, “aspects of non verbal behavior such as gaze direction”, etc.

When the turn transition relevance place is reached, what happens is not just a random, but free for all situations. There is an ordered set of rules for the allocation of the next turn. Below are the possible options:

- the current speaker selects the next speaker
 - the next speaker self-selects
 - the current speaker may (but does not have to) continue.
- Turn allocation mechanism involves the current speaker doing any of the

following:

- asking the next speaker a question
- naming the next speaker
- aligning the body or gaze so that the speaker is seen to be addressing a specific person at the end of his conversation.

(2) **Overlaps:**

Overlaps are simultaneous speech. Overlaps result from the speaker's failure to project the end of the last speaker's turn with complete accuracy. One kind of overlap is the one in which the speaker comes in at the point where they think the last speaker will finish. This is regarded as unintended. The other type is the one in which the new speaker may start to speak at the point in the last speaker's utterance. This is regarded as interruption which is intended.

An overlap may not necessarily be in form of speech. The source may also be other things such as the ringing of a phone, a knock on the door, a sudden loud bang or sound, and so forth.

(3) **Adjacency pairs:**

Most conversations, especially between two participants are coordinated in such a way that what the last speaker says constrains what the next speaker will meaningfully say. Thus, a question requests an answer, a greeting requests a greeting, an offer requests an acceptance or a rejection and so forth. Spoken interactions are typically structured around pairs of adjacent utterances which may be separated, by some elements as we can see in the conversation below:

- A: What is your Name?
B: Why do you want to know?
A: I just like you and want to be your friend.
B: Anyway I am Sandra

In conversation above, the question asked by 'A' did not elicit an answer until B was sure of A's intention. So, B's utterance rather than an answer was also a question which A had to answer before B's real response finally came. The embedded sequences of question and answer within the original pair are called **insertion sequences**.

Common Features of Languages in Context

1. Code switching and code mixing

Code switching refers to the use of two languages simultaneously or interchangeably in a communication: Code Switching is an intersentential phenomenon specific to bilinguals. It involves the use of two or more language codes from one sentence to another. Code Switching may be language switch or variety switch. Language switch is a switch from one language to another in one communication, while variety switch is a switch from one variety of language, eg a dialect (social, regional) or even a register to another. It is a deliberate act whose motivation is usually clear to people involved in the discourse.

Code-mixing on the other hand is an intersentential phenomenon, that is the use of two or more language codes within a sentence. It is also referred to as interlading. Code mixing involves the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes, words, phrases and clauses in the speech of a bilingual. According to Akindele and Adejite (1999:37), it is "a situation whereby two languages are used in a single sentence within major and minor constituent boundaries. The term code mixing emphasizes hybridization, and the term code-switching emphasizes on movement from one language to another.

Code switching has the following functions:

(a) **Translation:** A bilingual speaker who is addressing a mixed bilingual audience who has different levels of competence in the two languages may need to switch from one language to another to reach the audience.

(b) **Tenor:** Bilingual speakers switch from one language to another when they consider the participants in the speech event- their age, status, and relationship between them and the speaker.

(c) **Attitude:** A speaker's attitude to what is going on in the speech event determines the extent to which they switch from one language to another.

(d) **Stylistic:** A writer may switch from one language to another. This is especially common in creative writing in order to get their message across to bilingual readers.

People Code-switch for several other reasons, such as:

(a) to exclude others or some people from the conversation.

(b) to mark group identity

(c) to serve a linguistic need of providing lexical, phrasal, or sentence filler in an utterance.

(d) to quote someone

(e) to amplify parts of an utterance,

2. Interference:

Interference is an instance of transfer of elements from one language into another. This is also a feature of bilingualism. This kind of transfer may cut across any level of language- Lexical, Phonological, Syntactic, Semantic etc.

Scholars have identified two basic kinds of transfer - positive and negative transfer. A positive transfer refers to a situation in which the bilingual learner transfers the similar structures and concepts of their mother tongue into the target language (the language being learnt). This is described as positive transfer because it facilitates learning.

Our concern here however is on the other type of transfer, describe as negative transfer. This transfer leads to incorrect expressions in the target language. It is called interference. For interference

to occur there must be two languages which overlap. However, one of the languages is dominant. Interference occurs when the features of the dominant language are transferred to the subordinate or target language. This can occur at any level of language.

(A) Syntactic Interference- Let us examine the following utterances by an Igbo- English Bilingual:

1. My biro fell down from my pocket
2. The people they are stingy
3. You suppose to know the truth.

These utterances manifest different negative transfers. In the first one, there is the wrong use of the phrase verb “fell down from instead of fell off”. This is as a result of the translation equivalent in the mind of the speaker (*dara, Igbo - for fall down*).

The second sentence is an instance of subject copying. The subject- the people is copied by replacing to it with a pronoun “they”, which is redundant in the context. The utterance is also a translation equivalence of the Igbo sentence *Ndi ahụ bu ndi nwere aka ntagide*.

In the third sentence, the word “suppose” is normally proceeded by an auxiliary , and in this case, the auxiliary ‘are’, however in Igbo, the idea is expressed with one word *kwesiri*, as in *I kwesiri*, The correct English expression is “You are supposed”.

(B) Lexical interference: This occurs when speakers semantically extend the meaning of some English words, coin or create new word to express ideas that English do not have expressions for, for instance, the word ‘brother’ has been semantically extended in Nigerian English to include any body from one’s ethnic group. In Nigeria there are coinages such as go slow, chewing stick, long leg, which are meant to express concepts that cannot be found in the standard British English, but are realities in Nigeria.

(C) Phonological interference: This occurs in situations where bilingual lack some sounds in their mother tongue which are present in English. There is a tendency to simply replace the sound with the one closest to it in the mother tongue. For instance, a Yoruba English bilingual will naturally replace the labiovelar sound as represented in the first sound in think with /t/. It is also likely that a Hausa speaker will substitute the sound /p/, which is absent in their language with /f/, which is the closest to /p/ in the language.

(3) Borrowing: Borrowing in language terms refers to the act of picking words and expression from other languages and using them in a language because the concepts, the expression talks about do not exist in the language we speak. Borrowing is a very common language feature. It is a feature of situation in which speakers of different languages interact. In the course of interaction, words and expressions filter into each of these languages from speaker usage. When the borrowing is a lexical unit, it is called a **loan word**. Usually loan words adjust their external form to the rules of the grammar and phonetics of the receiving language. Neologism are words that have appeared in a language in connection with new phenomena, new concepts, but which have not yet entered into the active vocabularies of a significant portion of the native speakers of the language.

English has borrowed a lot of words and expressions from other languages in the world. Some of such borrowed words and the languages where they come from are listed below:

Afrikaans: Apartheid, commando, slim, trek
Egyptian: Ebony, ivory, paper
French: Ambulance, diplomat, restaurant
Hebrew: Amen, messiah, hallelujah
Latin: Calendar, data, maximum
German: Dollar, quartz, kindergarten
Greek: Athlete, museum, democracy
Arabic: Alcohol, clibre, zero
Turkish: Yoghurt, tulip, kebab
Russian: Marmot, vodka, Perestroika
Portuguese: Marmalade, flamingo, breeze

Conclusion

Really, following the trend in other industries and with global competition among world class universities to embrace the concept of internationalization and also the mad influence of internationalization on the behavior of higher education systems has taken popular position among researchers today.

As a result, Nigeria is expected to join the moving chariot to be involved in solving the global challenges. This work however, unfolded a hidden truth that “Language plays important roles in human society and national development, these roles are so crucial that social organizations and national development would have been completely impossible without them” Igiri (2017).

So, the writer focused on a study of Sociolinguistics, Discourse analysis and some rules that guide interaction in Language Discourse, all as progressive approaches to internationalization of English Language Education in Nigeria. However, the discussion in sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, rules that guide interaction in language discourse, Discourse structures, Discourse features and common features of language in context are all to package and prepare both Nigerian students and scholars to be relevant for internationally accepted standards.

Recommendations

1. Scholars and Students should be having constant self-development seminars, workshop and conferences to help update themselves to international standard.
2. Trainings and skill acquisition of Nigerian students in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels for internationalization especially in international language like English Language.
3. Reduction or stoppage of the incessant closure and strike in Nigeria Institutions of higher learning is very necessary to achieve Internationalization of Education in Nigeria.
4. Hence Educational system should be seen as the major source of all human knowledge, its funding should be number one in the Federal Government yearly budget.
5. Nigerian Government should revisit the criteria for leadership appointment into Educational System.
6. Conduct of accreditation should be well organized and to all levels of Education.

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